

BILLINGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT of the Medical Officer of Health for 1919.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you my report on the health and sanitary condition of the Urban District of Billinge for the year 1919. At the request of the Ministry of Health the Registrar General has furnished Medical Officers of Health with particulars of the vital statistics of their respective areas. From those particulars one observes that two distinct populations have been used in estimating the several rates furnished, viz., a "death-rate population" and a "birth-rate population."

THE MORTALITY RATE.—The deaths for 1919 number, males 27, females 33. The recorded rate per 1,000 of the population per annum is 13.1; in 1918, 17.6; and the mean for the corresponding years 1909-1918, 14.3.

Annual death-rate per 1,000 civilian population for 1919 is 13.8 for England and Wales.

BIRTHS.—During the year 1919 there were registered as belonging to your district 87 births—44 males and 43 females—as against 53 males and 68 females as a corresponding total registered for 1918. Of the 87 births, 1 was illegitimate.

The birth-rate for the district of Billinge is 18.3; for 1918, 24.7; and the mean for the corresponding years, 1909—1918, 26.3. The birth-rate for England and Wales per 1,000 total population was 18.5 for 1919.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.—The number of deaths of children under one year is 5, or 57 per 1,000 births. This figure compares favourably with the mean of 10 years, 1909—1918, when 110 was recorded, and with that of England and Wales for 1919, when 89 was recorded. An analysis of these 5 deaths shows that they may be grouped under the following headings:—

(1) Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	2
(2) Zymotic Enteritis	..	...	...	...	1
(3) Premature Birth and Congenital Debility					2

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.—During the year there were notified 26 cases of infectious disease, as against 22 for the previous year.

The following table shows the distribution of these diseases:—

	Billinge		Chapel End.	Billinge		Higher End.	Winstanley.
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...0	...	3	...	1
Diphtheria	...	..	...0	...	3	...	0
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...6	...	0	...	1
Other Forms of Tuberculosis	...	...	...3	...	0	...	0
Malaria	...	...	...1	...	0	...	2
Erysipelas	...	...	...1	...	0	...	0
Encephalitis Lethargica	...	...	...0	...	1	...	0
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...1	...	0	...	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	...1	...	0	...	0
Influenzal Pneumonia	...	...	...0	...	1	...	0
Zymotic Enteritis	...	...	...1	...	0	...	0

The principal Epidemic Diseases, namely, Smallpox, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup), Whooping Cough, Fever (comprising Enteric Typhus, and Continued Fever), and Diarrhoea with Enteritis, gave rise to 2 deaths, representing 3.3 per cent. of the total deaths from all causes.

The epidemic death-rate equals 0.43 per 1,000 of population, as compared with 0.68 for last year, and 0.74 for the mean of 10 years 1909—1918. The County death-rate in 1918 from these epidemic diseases, calculated per 1,000 of the estimated civilian population was 0.96 (Urban Districts 0.99, Rural Districts 0.77).

BRONCHITIS, PNEUMONIA, & BRONCHO-PNEUMONIA were credited with 15 deaths, corresponding to 25 per cent. of the total deaths from all causes. The Respiratory death-rates per 1,000 of the population for 1919 and 1918 are 3.2 and 2.97 respectively, and the mean for the corresponding years 1909—1918. 2.75

PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS.—This disease was the cause of 5 deaths, the rate produced being 1.09 per 1,000, as compared with 1.37 for last year, and 0.74 mean of 10 years, 1909—1918.

SCARLET FEVER.—Four cases of Scarlet Fever were notified in Billinge Higher End and Winstanley during the 3rd and 4th quarters of the year. The disease was confined to children over 10 years of age, and in no case was infection spread to other members of the family.

DIPHTHERIA.—Three cases of Diphtheria, with one death, were notified in Billinge Higher End during the first two quarters of the year. The whole of the cases occurred in a limited area possessing a soil retentive of moisture, and now recognised as an important factor in the propagation of Diphtheria.

MALARIA.—This disease, compulsarily notifiable under Public Health Regulations, 1919, was reported in three ex-soldiers, who had contracted the disease while abroad.

PUERPERAL FEVER.—One case of this disease has been reported, and ended in death. From investigation I found that the case did not manifest any unfavourable symptoms until the patient had received attention from a person untrained in maternity work. To safeguard future cases, I have advised all midwives practising in my area to forbid all interference on the part of relatives and friends who visit their cases.

ENCEPHALITIS LETHARGICA.—One case of this disease was notified during an outbreak of Influenza. The schedule of inquiry with respect to it was filled in and forwarded to the Ministry of Health. Apart from the history of Influenza, I was unable to discover any possible source of infection, as the sanitary conditions of the home were exceptionally good.

DRAINS, SEWERS, & SEWAGE DISPOSAL.—No new work has been carried out during the year, and the nuisances arising therefrom have been of a minor character. The effluents from the several Sewage Farms have given satisfactory results.

CLEANSING & SCAVENGING.—The conservancy type of closet accommodation is in vogue in the district, and is carried out during the day by the Council's workmen. Owing to the sparsely populated character of the district, some delay in carrying out the work is inevitable, unless the local authority be given some assistance in the matter. The complaints received during the year have been few, and the work has entailed an expenditure of £305.

DISINFECTION.—This has been carried out as in the past, by means of chemical agents, but the use of a disinfecting apparatus will be available at an early date.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.—One private slaughter house exists in the district, and this has not been used for years, owing to the Government requirement that cattle should be killed, as far as practicable, in a central slaughter house. It is to be hoped that such centralised slaughtering will continue, so as to facilitate meat inspection, and hasten the abolition of slaughter houses whose sites and structure fail modern sanitary requirements.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, & MILKSHOPS.—These are in a fairly satisfactory condition, and the supply of milk has met the needs of the people.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.—Birchley Schools were closed owing to Epidemic Influenza, from February 15th—28th, and the insanitary conditions and yard space and sanitary conveniences—already reported upon—are unabated.

FACTORIES & WORKSHOPS ACT (1901).—During the year no complaint has been reported by the Factory Inspector, nor have any lists of Outworkers been received from other Authorities. The workshops classified as undermentioned have been visited, and the sanitary conditions found satisfactory.

Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	4
Domestic Workshops	...	...	...	...	...	3
Cloggers and Boot Repairers	...	...	...	...	...	3
Joiners	...	...	...	...	...	2
Shoeing Smith	...	...	...	...	...	1

MATERNITY & CHILD WELFARE.—The work in connection with this matter has been carried out by the County Health Visitor, Midwives, and myself. As requested in my last annual report, special cases requiring investigation have been submitted by the County Health Visitor, and dealt with according to existing circumstances. I am pleased to report that few cases have occurred necessitating financial assistance, and in no case has negligence or want of care on the part of the mother been reported. Although Billinge does not possess a “Mother and Child Welfare Centre,” much financial and other assistance is available from sources non-existent in many districts.

WATER SUPPLY —This was insufficient, particularly in Billinge Chapel End, during the 3rd quarter of the year. This in large measure results from our supplies being tapped by mining and boring operations. I am sorry to report that the emergency supply taken from Upholland did not give the satisfactory results anticipated, owing to inefficient pressure in the mains. To supplement our present supply, operations are now in progress with a view to obtaining additional supplies from a disused shaft.

Under Section 1 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919, a survey of the district has been made to provide housing accommodation for the needs of the district. As housing accommodation is not likely to be provided in this area by Public Utility Societies, Housing Trusts, business firms, or private enterprise, the housing needs must necessarily be provided by the Local Authority. From data dealing with overcrowding, growth of population, sanitary condition of existing property, and other matters incidental thereto, the number of houses required total 120. To meet this deficiency an outline scheme has been submitted to the Minister of Health, and the lay-out for twenty houses in Beacon Lane has been sanctioned.

Although Local Authorities are now empowered to lend money for the purchase of houses by tenants, and also to house owners to carry out necessary repairs, no applications have been made.

With regard to the insanitary property which preponderates in Billinge Chapel End, I am convinced that reconstruction is the only policy to adopt in at least 38 cases inspected by me.

Death-rate	...	...	...	...	...	13.1
Birth-rate	...	...	...	...	...	18.3
Zymotic Death-rate	...	...	...	...	...	0.43

I am,

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

RICHARD OSWALD MATHER, M.D., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health.

April 26th, 1920.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT for the Year ending December, 1919.

To the Urban District Council of Billinge.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting a report of the sanitary work carried out during the year 1919.

The Medical Officer and myself have made several inspections of property during the year, and reported the same to the Council.

The ashpits have been attended to regularly, and the drains kept in proper order. In cases of infectious disease precautionary measures have been taken, disinfectants freely used, and after instructions from Medical Attendant, houses fumigated.

BAKEHOUSES.—There are four bakehouses in the district, and they have been inspected, and found to be kept in proper order.

FRIED FISH SHOPS.—These have been inspected, and found to be very clean.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.—One licensed.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.—None in the district.

COWSHEDS & DAIRIES.—These have been inspected, and limewashing in most cases attended to.

Statutory Notices Served ...	...	...	...	...	20
Informal Notices Served ...	...	...	...	...	12
Defective Sanitary Conveniences ...	...	...	...	...	5
Defective Drains ...	...	...	...	...	4
Defective or Insufficient Ventilation ...	...	...	...	...	2
Defective Roofs ...	...	...	...	...	3
Defective Spouting ...	...	...	...	...	2
Defective Chimney Stacks...	...	...	...	...	2
Defective Cellar ...	...	...	...	...	1
Defective Windows ...	...	...	...	...	1
Nuisances Remedied ...	...	...	...	...	23
Fumigations, ...	...	...	...	...	12

Nuisances of a minor character have been dealt with without notice; owners after an interview being willing to carry out the necessary requirements.

Cowkeepers Registered ...	...	...	...	...	35
No. of Inspections during the year...	...	...	...	...	32
Privy Middens ...	...	{	No. of Ashpits ...	...	406
			No. of Privies...	...	602
No. of Pail Closets ...	...	...	...	...	10
No. of Ashpits, excluding Middens...	...	...	...	...	63
No. of Fresh Water Closets ...	...	...	...	...	33

NEW PROPERTY.—Chapel End, none; Higher End, none; Winstanley, none.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

RICHARD POWELL,

Sanitary Inspector.